



April 26, 2021

The Honorable Joe Deshotel
Chairman, Land and Resource Management Committee
Texas House of Representatives
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Austin, Texas 78711-2910

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Dear Chairman Deshotel:

I am writing on behalf of the City of Corpus Christi to express our opposition to **House Bill 1877** by **Gates**. Our city has been rooted in strong relationships between our Development Services' staff and our local developers and design professionals. We work with our development community to enforce the International Code Council's building codes to create a safe, and prosperous built environment.

H.B. 1877 would prohibit a city from requiring the owner of a vacant residential building, when repairing damage to the building, to improve the building to a condition that is better than would have been legally acceptable before the damage occurred, including by requiring conformance to updated building code standards.

My staff understands that this bill targets vacant residential buildings and works to remove any financial impediments to updating these properties to safe, living standards. We work every day to facilitate development in our community from new residential construction to remodels of existing structures. Due to our proximity to the coast, we deal with turbulent weather and hurricane season. This has resulted in vacant buildings left in high-value areas. I want my city to redevelop, and remodel these vacant residential homes, but I need it done right.

The only true benchmark of domicile safety is through a framework of sensible building codes that ensure a baseline of safety. We currently enforce the 2015 International Residential Code, just like hundreds of other cities in the great state of Texas. This is the bare minimum that is required, to guarantee safety. If this bill passes, it will create an environment of substandard remodels that give an appearance of safety with no guarantees. As you know, the devil is in the details. In this case, the details are mechanical, electrical, and plumbing permit reviews and on-site inspections, in accordance with our adopted building codes. If you take away our municipality's right to enforce common-sense building as safety codes during remodels, we will have no way of ensuring that Texans and Corpus Christians are living in safety.

This bill will result in substandard work being done. It penalizes undue liability for failure to comply via court costs and unreasonable attorney's fees. My staff needs to be able to review and inspect residential remodels without the fear of legal reprimanding for doing their job of reviewing for building and safety codes.

Please allow us to be diligent in our work as administrators and proctors of building codes by adopting and enforcing, laws, ordinances and other regulations that promote responsible development. I ask that you oppose **House Bill 1877**.

Respectfully,

Al Raymond III, AIA, CBO
Director, Development Services Department (DSD)
City of Corpus Christi